

Anthropology of Human Rights

16:070:604:01, Spring 2013

Dept of Anthropology, Rutgers University

Prof Daniel Goldstein: Office hours for Spring: Tues 2-4; Wed 1:30-2:15

Wed 2:15-5:15, RAB 302

Course Description

Human rights is a global conception that has produced many and varied impacts, has been adapted and reworked in local contexts worldwide, and has become the object of as well as a resource for popular struggle, state policymaking, and transnational movements – all of which makes it a perfect subject for anthropological analysis. But anthropology has a long and complicated relationship with human rights, as this course explores. We will examine the origins and expansion of human rights thinking, and the impacts this has had on national formations and local contexts. We will go on to consider the conflicts between culture and rights that have emerged in this process, and the question of universality in the application of human rights around the world. The course will also consider the ways in which rights conceptions have been mobilized in local struggles, with a particular geographical focus on Latin America. We will look at specific manifestations of rights as captured in ethnographic writing, including issues of indigenous rights, women's rights, the relationship between security and rights, and the rights of transnational migrants. Students will develop one particular theme from among those studied in their final research paper for the course.

Books

Goldstein, Daniel M. 2012. *Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City*. Durham: Duke University Press. ISBN 0822353113

Ignatieff, Michael. 2003. *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. ISBN 0691114749

Merry, Sally Engle. 2006. *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226520749

Moyn, Samuel. 2010. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. ISBN 0674064348

Nelson, Diane M. 2009. *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala*. Durham: Duke University Press. ISBN 082234324X

Ticktin, Miriam. 2011. *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN 0520269055

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Weekly reading and active participation (20% of course grade)– Students who attend without participating actively each week will not receive A grades for the course.
2. Discussion leadership – (% included in participation) Each student will have at least one opportunity to assist me in facilitating the seminar, preparing questions and activities to help explore the readings for that week's class.
3. Weekly critical memos (20% of course grade) – 1-2 pages maximum in length, double-spaced. These should be posted to the course Sakai site (in the appropriate "Memos" folder, under "Resources") by 5:00 pm every Tuesday. Everyone in class should read each other's memos prior to class, and come prepared to debate, critique, and query.
4. Critical essay (60% of course grade)– All seminar participants must write a critical essay of NO MORE THAN 20 double-spaced pages of text (not including endnotes and bibliography). The essay should develop a particular theme related to seminar readings and discussion through critical analysis and/or comparisons of materials read for class, using additional materials where desired. Seminar participants will make short oral presentations based on work in progress, during the last class session. Due dates are as follows:
 - a. paper topic proposal (one paragraph): by Fri 17 Feb
 - b. paper abstract (one page) and preliminary bibliography (7-10 sources) due: Fri 1 Mar
 - c. rough draft due (at least 50% of the text, plus outline of the remainder): Fri 12 Apr
 - d. in-class presentation: Wed 1 May
 - e. final draft due (electronic copies only; late papers marked down one letter grade): Wed 8 May

Course Schedule

W 23 Jan – Introduction to the course

W 30 Jan – The politics and philosophy of human rights

Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*

Plus, review some of the more important International Agreements (esp. UDHR, ICESCR, etc); on Sakai

W 6 Feb – The history of human rights

Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*

W 13 Feb – Culture and/of/versus rights

Cowan, Jane, Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, and Richard Wilson. 2002. Introduction. *In Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives*. J. Cowan, M-B. Dembour, and R. Wilson, eds. Pp. 1-25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dembour, Marie-Bénédicte. 2001. Following the Movement of a Pendulum: Between Universalism and Relativism. *In Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson*. Pp. 56-79

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2001. Between Universalism and Relativism: A Critique of the UNESCO Concept of Culture. *In Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson*.

Merry, Sally Engle. 2001. Changing Rights, Changing Culture. *In Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson*.

Preis, Ann-Belinda S. 1996. Human Rights as Cultural Practice: An Anthropological Critique. *Human Rights Quarterly* 18(2): 286-315.

Zechenter, Elizabeth. 1997. In the Name of Culture: Cultural Relativism and the Abuse of the Individual. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 53(3): 319-348.

W 20 Feb – Anthropology and the human rights debate

American Anthropological Assoc. 1947. Statement on Human Rights. *American Anthropologist* 49 (4): 539-43.

American Anthropological Assoc. 1999. Declaration on Anthropology and Human Rights.

<http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/humanrts.htm>

Barnett, H.G. 1948. On Science and Human Rights. *American Anthropologist* 50: 352-5.

Engle, Karen. 2001. From Skepticism to Embrace: Human Rights and the American Anthropological Association. *Human Rights Quarterly* 23: 536-560.

Merry, Sally Engle. 2003. Human Rights Law and the Demonization of Culture (And Anthropology Along the Way). *Polar: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 26(1): 55-77.

Messer, Ellen. 1993. Anthropology and Human Rights. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22: 221-49.

Riles, Annelise. 2006. Anthropology, Human Rights, and Legal Knowledge: Culture in the Iron Cage. *American Anthropologist* 108(1):52:65.

Steward, Julian. 1948. Comments on the Statement on Human Rights. *American Anthropologist* 50: 351-2.

W 27 Feb – Can anthropology make a difference? Anthropology and human rights activism

Farmer, Paul, and Nicole Gastineau. 2002. Rethinking Health and Human Rights: Time for a Paradigm Shift. *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics*. 30(4): 655-66

Goldstein, *Outlawed*, chapter 2.

González, Roberto J. 2007. Towards mercenary anthropology? *Anthropology Today* 23(3):14-19.

Kirsch, Stuart. 2002. Anthropology and Advocacy: A Case Study of the Campaign against the Ok Tedi Mine. *Critique of Anthropology* 22(2): 175-200.

McFate, Montgomery. 2005. The military utility of understanding adversary culture. *Joint Force Quarterly* 38:42-48. Plus, her response to González (“Building Bridges or Burning Heretics?”)

Speed, Shannon. 2006. At the Crossroads of Human Rights and Anthropology: Toward a Critically Engaged Activist Research. *American Anthropologist* 108: 66-76.

Turner, Terry, et al. 2009. Anthropology and Human Rights: Do Anthropologists Have an Ethical Obligation to Promote Human Rights? An Open Exchange. *In Goodale*. Pp. 198-205.

W 6 Mar – Ethnographies of rights 1: Human rights and security in Bolivia

Goldstein, *Outlawed*.

W 13 Mar – Ethnographies of rights 2: Genocide, horror, aftermath

Nelson, *Reckoning*.

W 27 Mar - Indigenous rights as human rights

Bowen, John. 2000. Should We Have a Universal Concept of Indigenous Peoples' Rights? *Anthropology Today* 16(4):12-16.

Brysk, Allison. 1996. Turning Weakness into Strength: The Internationalization of Indian Rights. *Latin American Perspectives* 23(2):38-57.

Samson, Colin. 2001. Rights as the Reward for Simulated Cultural Sameness: The Innu in the Canadian Colonial Context. *In* Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson. Pp. 226-248.

Stavenhagen, Rodolfo. 1996. Indigenous Rights. Some Conceptual Problems. *In* Constructing Democracy: Human Rights, Citizenship, and Society in Latin America. E. Jelin & E. Hershberg, eds. Pp. 141-159. Boulder: Westview.

United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO). 1993. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. <http://www.cwis.org/drft9329.html#UN%20Draft%20Declaration%20on%20the%20Rights%20of%20Indigenous%20Peoples>

W 3 Apr – Immigrant rights as human rights

Arendt, Hannah. 2009. The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man. *In* Goodale, pp.32-57.

Chavez, Leo. 2007. The Condition of Illegality. *International Migration* 45(3): 192-6.

DeGenova, Nicholas. 2004. The Legal Production of Mexican/migrant “Illegality.” *Latino Studies* 2: 160-85.

Fassin, Didier. 2011. Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries: The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40: 213-26.

Peutz, Natalie. 2006. Embarking on an Anthropology of Removal. *Current Anthropology* 47(2): 217-241.

Walters, William. 2004. Secure Borders, Safe Haven, Domopolitics. *Citizenship Studies* 8(3): 237-260.

W 10 Apr – Ethnographies of rights 3: Immigration and regimes of care

Ticktin, *Casualties of Care*.

W 17 Apr – Women’s rights as human rights

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2011. The Active Social Life of “Muslim Women’s Rights.” *In* Gender and Culture at the Limit of Rights. D.L. Hodgson, ed. Pp. 101-119. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Binion, Gayle. 1995. Human Rights: A Feminist Perspective. *Human Rights Quarterly* 17:509-526

Brems, Eva. 1997. Enemies or Allies? Feminism and Cultural Relativism as Dissident Voices in Human Rights Discourse. *Human Rights Quarterly* 19: 136-164.

Bunch, Charlotte. 1990. Women’s Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-vision of Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly* 12(4):486-98.

Hodgson, Dorothy L. 2011. “These Are Not Our Priorities:” Maasai Women, Human Rights, and the Problem of Culture. *In* Hodgson. Pp. 138-157.

W 24 Apr – Ethnographies of rights 4: Human rights and gender violence

Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*.

W 1 May – Presentations of student research